Overview of the Health Impact Assessment Process

July 14, 2015

Karen Reed, M.A.,C.D.E

Division Director

Virginia Department of Health, Office of Minority Health & Health Equity

Division of Multicultural Health & Community Engagement

109 Governor Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219



Objectives

Overview of Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

• HIA Goals & Objectives & Values

Types of HIAs

• Desk Based, Rapid, Intermediate Comprehensive

Overview of the Six Steps in Conducting HIA

HIA Examples & Resources



Health Impact Assessment (HIA)



A systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods and considers input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects.

National Research Council, Improving Health in the United States: The Role of Health Impact Assessment, 2011.



Why use HIA?

The effects policies have on health, and in particular, how they can alter the health of *all* people in the population.

Non-health sector decisions, where health is not the main objective, may have major effects on the health and well-being of people, particularly vulnerable groups.



Values of Health Impact Assessment

HIA aims to advance the values of:

- Democracy
- Equity
- Sustainable Development
- Ethical Use of Evidence



HIA ...

HIA is an approach that:

- Gets people to think about what they are doing,
- How these decisions may alter people's health.

HIA promotes health:

Long term contributions to the health of local people



Example: Imagine Richmond is planning to build a subway rail system.

Question: What would the HIA answer?



In this Example a HIA Would Answer... "How would this new development affect people's health?".

- Would the subway increase or decrease noise, air or light pollution?
- How would the subway affect local businesses and jobs?
- Would the new subway reduce or increase the stress for local people?
- How would a new subway change the local infrastructure needs - and would this be good or bad for local people?





The Purpose/Function of HIA is to:

- Inform and influence the decision maker
- Help address inequalities in health.
- Promote joined-up working.
- Place public health on the agenda
- Reduce conflict between stakeholders
- Encourage sustainable development



HIA purpose/function is achieved by:

- Using a broad understanding of health.
- Using a participatory approach that considers which stakeholders need to be involved
- Helping involve local people in decisions and responding to their concerns about health.
- Considering different types of evidence from local views to scientific information.
- Assessing how the proposal will affect all members of the community - particularly the most vulnerable.
- Assisting with sustainable development by considering short and long term impacts.



Many factors that impact health

- The social and economic environment
- The physical environment
- The person's individual characteristics and behaviours.
 - For example, income and social status higher income and social status are linked to better health. The greater the gap between the richest and poorest people, the greater the differences in health.
 - For example, education low education levels are linked with poor health, more stress and lower self-confidence.



Different Types of HIAs

Desk Based	Rapid	Intermediate	Comprehensive
2-4 Weeks	6-12 Weeks	12 Weeks to six Month	6-12 Months for one person full time
Provides broad overview of potential health impacts	Provides more detailed overview of potential health impacts	Provides a more thorough assessment of potential health impacts, and more detail on specific predicted impacts	Provides a comprehensive assessment of potential health impacts.



When is an HIA Undertaken?

Before implementation (prospective) - to allow steps to be taken to change a proposal at the planning stage.





Six Steps of HIA

- 1. Screening determine if HIA is useful for specific project or policy
- 2. Scoping identify health effects to consider
- 3. Assessment perform research, determine populations affected & how
- 4. Recommendations suggest changes to proposal to promote positive or mitigate adverse health effects
- 5. Reporting present results to decision-makers
- Monitoring and Evaluation determine effect of HIA on decision process

Step 1: Screening

What is HIA Screening?

The Screening process helps determine if:

- ... the HIA is feasible
 - Is there sufficient information about the decision?
 - Is there available resources to conduct the HIA?
- ... the HIA can be done in a timely manner
 - Can the HIA fit within the decision-making time frame?
- ... the HIA would add value to the decision making process
 - Is health already at the table?
 - Will the proposed project benefit from an HIA and promote health and influence positive change to the community?



Step 2: Scoping



Two Main Goals:

- 1. Create the plan for the HIA
- 2. Determine health indicators to be assessed



Step 3: Assessment

Assessment - perform research, determine populations affected & how

Main goals:

- 1. Profile baseline conditions, characteristics of target populations
- 2. Analyze potential health effects of decisions





Step 4: Recommendations

Use results from assessment to develop recommendations which may include:

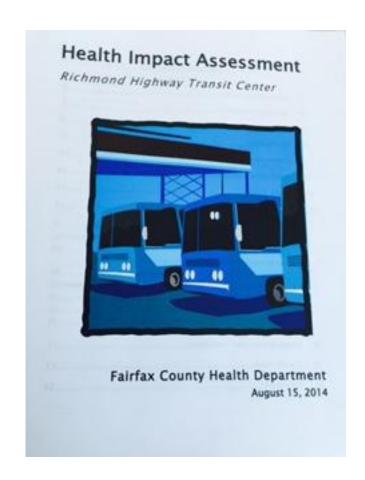
- Alternative ways to design a project, plan, or policy including its location or timing to benefit health
- Mitigations management strategies to lessen anticipated adverse health effects of a decision



Step 5: Reporting

Two main products:

- Develop full HIA report and communicate findings and recommendations
- Develop a succinct summary for effective communication





Step 6: Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring—What happened?

Monitor recommendations & implementation

- Were the HIA recommendations adopted?
- Has the policy, program or plan been implemented?

Monitor health determinants and outcomes

 Were there changes in exposures, health outcomes/determinants & any unexpected consequences



Virginia HIA Examples

 Building a new transit center along Richmond Highway Corridor in Northern Virginia

 Proposed poultry litter-to-energy facility in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.



Resources about HIA

Many examples of HIA are available on:

www.who.int/hia

www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm

http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OMHHE/healthequity/hia/in
dex.htm

These sites also provides information:

About HIA

Tools and methods to do HIA

How HIA contributes to policy making

The evidence used in HIA

HIA related links and networks.



Thank You

Questions Comments

Karen Reed, M.A.,C.D.E

Division Director, Multicultural Health &
Community Engagement
804-864-7435
Karen.Reed@vdh.virginia.gov

